

the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33). He commands, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (verse 40). It is wrong to bind a certain order of worship, but it is equally sinful to worship in a sloppy manner. Order is not bad. It is commanded of God.

Proper worship is **reverent**, i.e., respectful to God. “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all those about him (Psalm 89:7; cf. Hebrews 12:23-29).

This obeisance is **sincere**. We should assemble out of love for God and desire to commune with Him (Psalm 122:1). Is the hour of worship a drudgery or an occasion of joy for you? We should not engage in items of veneration just to be seen and praised of men (Matthew 6:1,5).

The beauty in the worship the Lord demands is “the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:2). To be “**holy**” is to be set apart from sin. Christians are a “holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). God does not require that you possess a beautiful voice in order to sing His praises, but He does command that you possess a beautiful life. One cannot live a sinful life and offer holy homage unto God.

Worship in spirit is **instructional**. One major reason Christians assemble is “to stir up love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24-25). In our assemblies, “Let all things be done for edifying” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Finally, when we venerate the Father in spirit, we put **pomp aside**. The vain show of beautiful sounding choruses, the appeal of expensive decorations and ornate buildings, and the worldly lure of liturgy and ceremony have no place in simple New Testament worship. Such pomp is an appeal to the flesh of man, whereas true worship is a spiritual sacrifice to God (Romans 8:5-8).

In Truth

True worship is in “truth.” What acts of worship does the New Testament authorize for Christians?

God approves the **teaching and preaching** of His word (Acts 20:7). The evangelist must “preach the word,” not his opinions, humorous stories, personal testimonials, human philosophy, or denominational creeds (2 Timothy 4:1-5). We are to be edified, not entertained.

The Lord authorizes “**laying by in store**,” i.e., the contribution, as an act of public veneration in the first day of the week assembly of the saints (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This passage reveals five essentials covering the contribution and how the church is to solicit the money with which to perform its work. When are we to give? “Upon the first day of the week.” Who is to lay by in store? “Every one of you.” What

should we do? “lay by in store,” i.e., give as stewards to receive blessings from our Lord for serving Him. How should we give? “...as God has prospered him...” Why should the contribution be taken? “...that there be no gatherings when I come...”, i.e., so that the congregation may discharge its mission without an emergency contribution.

True homage includes eating **the Lord’s Supper** in remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). This memorial feast is to be eaten by Christians in the assembly on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Just as the command to the Jews to “Remember the Sabbath day” (Exodus 20:8) meant each Sabbath day, even so the approved example of breaking bread “upon the first day of the week” includes each first day of the week.

Prayer is an essential part of public worship (Acts 20:36).

Finally, the will of Christ teaches **singing** as a proper act of worship (Ephesians 5:18-19). God has specified the kind of music He desires - singing (vocal) (Ephesians 5:19). This eliminates the only other kind of music - playing (instrumental). He has also made known the types of songs we are to employ - “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Ibid).

Conclusion

Our Father will accept only one kind of veneration, “true” worship. Such homage is “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). Is your worship acceptable to God? Do you worship the Father in spirit and truth?

Works Cited

Arndt, W.F. and F.W. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**.

Bible

English Standard Version

International Standard Version

New American Standard Bible

Mounce, William, **Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words**.

Vine, W.E., **Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words**.

Questions for Review

I. Fill in the Blank

1. List seven characteristics of worship “in spirit.”

a. _____

Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson Twenty-two
True Worship

Introduction

Man, in each age, civilization, and location, with a spirit in the image of his Creator and with a yearning for fellowship with his Maker, naturally worships something (Acts 17:22-23). Christians properly recognize that one Being alone is worthy of our homage - God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe (Acts 10:25-26; Revelation 19:10). But, how are we to worship God?

Definition

The Hebrew word commonly translated “worship” in the Old Testament “essentially means ‘to bow down.’... It is the external action of an internal attitude” (Mounce. 810). Thus, the psalmist exhorted, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Psalm 95:6). The Greek word commonly rendered “worship” in the New Testament is parallel, signifying to “(fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to” (Arndt & Gingrich. 723; cf. Revelation 11:16). Thus, worship is “an act of homage or reverence” (Vine: **New Testament.** 686).

True Worship

“True worship,” worship acceptable to God, is “in spirit and truth” (John 4:19-24).

To venerate God “in spirit” is to do so with the right attitude (cf. Romans 12:11), from the heart. As the psalmist proclaimed, “... I will praise the Lord with my whole heart...” (Psalm 111:1).

Worship “in truth” is according to the Word of God (John 17:17). We must do homage to God in the way He teaches in His Word. If we worship according to our own desires, rather than in harmony with the New Testament, we are guilty of “self-made religion” (Colossians 2:20-23, **NASB, ISV, ESV**).

In Spirit

What are the characteristics of worship that is truly “in spirit”? Such veneration is “**with understanding**” (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). To so worship we must comprehend what is said and done and think about what we are doing.

Homage in spirit is **orderly**. The inspired apostle warns, “God is not

- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____

2. List the five acts of worship “in truth.”

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

II. Matching

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ worship | A. with the right attitude |
| 2. _____ true worshipers | B. worship according to our own desires |
| 3. _____ in spirit | C. for building up, instructing |
| 4. _____ in truth | D. an act of homage or reverence |
| 5. _____ self-made religion | E. set apart from sin |
| 6. _____ reverent | F. according to the Word of God |
| 7. _____ holy | G. those who worship in spirit and in truth |
| 8. _____ edifying | H. respectful |